

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	EAS.53
Historic Name:	Nickerson, Reuben House
Common Name:	
Address:	20 Bridge Rd
City/Town:	Eastham
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	20-014
Year Constructed:	c 1830
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival
Use(s):	Funeral Home; Hotel or Inn; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce
Area(s):	EAS.J: Bridge - Dyer Prince Roads Area
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Cedar Shingle Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood Flushboard; Wood Shingle; Wood Foundation: Brick



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

EAS-53

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Assessor's
Number

20/014

USGS Quad

Orleans

Area(s)

5

Form Number

53

Town

Eastham

neighborhood or village)

20 Bridge Road

Public Name

Present Residential

Original "

Construction c. 1830

See Bibliography*

Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder

Primary Material:

Foundation

Brick

Wall/Trim Clapboard (Facade), Flushboard
(Pediment), Shingles (Side and Rear
Elevations)

Roof Cedar Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Small
Summer Cottage

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition Good

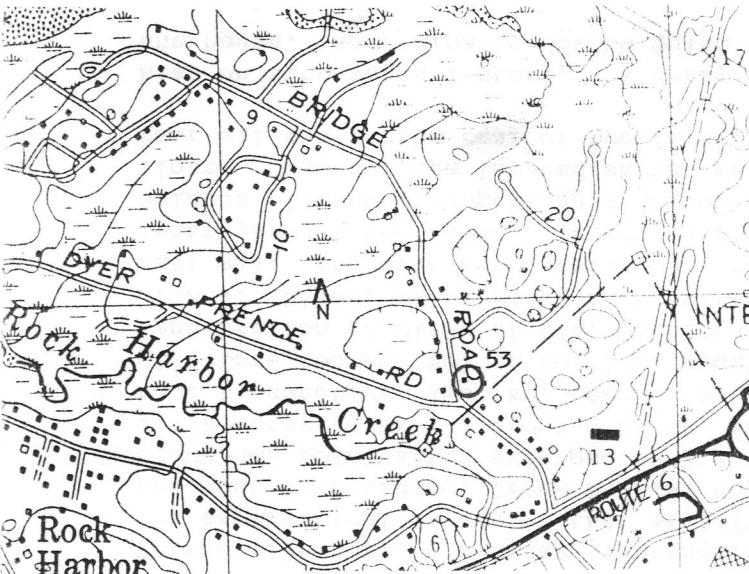
Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 3.25 Acres

Setting Located in a moderately-settled,
rural area near the intersection of Dyer
Prince Road.



here. Indicate North.



Recorded by: Dianne L. Siergiej
and Sanford Johnson
Organization: Commonwealth Collaborative

Date: August 1995

RECEIVED

SEP 20 1995

MASS. HIST. COMM.

BUILDING FORM

20 Bridge Road

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION See continuation sheet.

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This 2 1/2-story, 4 x 2-bay, rectangular, gable-end, dwelling is similar in its asymmetrical facade to that at 1775 State Highway and likewise is among the most-outstanding, Greek Revival houses in Eastham. In this case, the main block has been vastly enlarged by 3 successive rear ells. The first is a 1 1/2-story, rear ell fronted by the an open porch with balustraded roof leads to 2 consecutive, 1-story, rear ells. Detail includes wide, paneled pilasters, boxed, molded cornice, pedimented gable and a 2-part, wide frieze. Fenestration consists of 6/6, double-hung sash with plain trim and period blinds. Fixed, multi-paned sash exists in the north elevation of the 1-story, rear ell. The main entry reflects a possible earlier construction date for at least part of the house. It consists of a 7-panel wooden door with slightly-bulbous pilasters supporting a narrow entablature above a semi-circular fan light. Chimneys are located on the main block, at the rear of the 1 1/2-story rear ell and at the rear of the first, 1-story, rear ell.

Also on site was a 1-story, 3 x 2-bay cottage located to the southeast of the house. According to Howard Quinn the rear porch was added in 1920.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE X See continuation sheet.

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The Rogers map of 1795 and the Hales map of 1831 indicate Bridge Road was laid out during the Federal Period. The reconnaissance report of the Massachusetts Historical Commission describes the road as a local loop off King's Highway. The second meetinghouse was built in the area by 1720 and a school was built in 1762. By 1831, there were salt works, several residences and a shallow canal from the Boat Meadow River to Town Cove near the southern end of Bridge Road. The road was extended north in 1837 when a bridge was constructed over the Boat Meadow River and accorded a name to the route. Agriculture played an important role in the development of Eastham from the Colonial Period through the Early Modern Period.

The house at 20 Bridge was probably in place by 1831, as a building occupies its site on the Hales map of that year. Title research conducted by Nancy Heller of the Eastham Historical Commission dates the property at least to the 1850's and suggests the house may incorporate an earlier dwelling built during the eighteenth century by Dean Smith and willed to his spouse, Elizabeth, upon his death. Reuben Nickerson may have bought and enlarged that house or built the this house himself around 1835.

Reuben Nickerson was born in 1814 in Provincetown, Massachusetts. He worked as a farmer and saltmaker, served the public as a senator, school committee member, and representative. He was married twice: first to Elizabeth Doane

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES X See continuation sheet.

 X Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;

If checked, see attached National Register Criteria Statement form.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

who died leaving two children, Isabelle and Alpheus, and second to Sarah Doane, sister of Elizabeth, with whom he had two children, of whom one, Herbert D. Nickerson, survived.

Reuben Nickerson died intestate in 1890. The property was inherited by eight heirs, most of whom apparently died intestate so that by 1954, Herbert D. Nickerson and Hattie Nickerson had singular control. In the Eastham Resident Directory of 1901, Isabelle Nickerson (d. 1905), the daughter of Reuben and Elizabeth, is listed as resident at a house near the Orleans town line on Bridge Road.

Herbert and Hattie lived in the house and operated a funeral home from 1934 until c. 1957. At that time, the property was sold to Joseph and Jean Putnam who operated a bed and breakfast inn the house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (continued)

Deyo, Simeon L. ed., History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts, 1620-1890, (New York: H. W. Blake, 1890), p. 742.

*House File: 20 Bridge Road, Eastham Historical Society Archives.

Lowe, Alice Alberta, Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham, (Falmouth: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), p. 58.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Reconnaissance Report: Eastham, Massachusetts.

Quinn, Howard. Transcript of Oral History Tape, Eastham Historical Society Archives.

Resident and Business Directory of Cape Cod, 1901.

Hales, John G. Map of the Town of Eastham, 1830.

Roger, Josiah, Knowles, Elijah and Kinsman, Simeon. Map of the Town of Eastham, 1794.

Walker, George F. Atlas of Barnstable County. Boston: George F. Walker & Co., 1880.

_____. Atlas of Barnstable County. Boston Walker Lithographer and Publishing Co., 1908.

Wallings, Henry F. Map of Eastham. Boston: D. R. Smith Co., 1858.



Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community: Eastham
Property Address: 20 Bridge Road

Area Form No. 53

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible only in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a ☐ Potential historic district
potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by: Dianne L. Siergiej
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The property at 20 Bridge Road is significant on a local level with regard to the above-referenced criteria as the best preserved of two, outstanding examples of a large, gable-end, Greek Revival house in Eastham, a community typically of small residences. It is also significant for its associations with Reuben Nickerson, a local farmer, businessman, school committee member, state representative and senator.

Original yellow form: Eligibility file _____
Copies: Inventory form 2
Town file(w/corresp.) _____
Macris _____
NR director _____

EAS.53

Community: Eastham

MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Date Received:

Date Due:

Date Reviewed: 12/6/95

Type: x Individual

___ District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name:

Inventory Form: EAS.53

Address: 20 Bridge Road

Requested by: LHC

Action: x Honor ___ ITC ___ Grant ___ R & C ___ Other:

Agency:

Staff in charge of Review: BF

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

x Eligible
___ Eligible, also in district
___ Eligible only in district
___ Ineligible
___ More information needed

DISTRICTS

___ Eligible
___ Ineligible
___ More information needed

CRITERIA: x A ___ B x C ___ D

LEVEL: x Local ___ State ___ National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Michael Steinitz

20 Bridge Road is eligible individually for listing on the National Register under criteria A and C as an outstanding example of Eastham Greek Revival residential architecture, and for its 120+ year association with the Nickerson family of Eastham, particularly Reuben Nickerson (1814-1890), farmer, saltmaker, state senator, and representative. A nomination would need to address more fully the associations of the house with other members of the Nickerson family and their roles in Eastham history. 20 Bridge Road may also be eligible as part of a larger National Register district along Bridge Road. More information in the form of an MHC Area Form for Bridge Road would be necessary for MHC to evaluate the eligibility potential of this area.